



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Maryland's Social Services Agency



MEDIA RELEASE

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For more information:

Paula Tolson

410-767-7758

ptolson@dhr.state.md.us

WICOMICO, WORCESTER AND QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTIES' LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES HONORED FOR PROGRESS IN CHILD WELFARE

BALTIMORE – Wicomico, Worcester and Queen Anne's Counties local departments of social services were recognized for meeting or exceeding several child welfare standards.

At an awards ceremony earlier today, Maryland Department of Human Resources Secretary Brenda Donald honored Wicomico County Department of Social Services for reducing the number of children in foster care by 29 percent. Worcester County Department of Social Services was honored for Services reduced the number of children placed in group homes by 63 percent and placing 85 percent of children in family settings. Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services was honored for increasing family reunifications by 67 percent.

In February of 2007, Donald introduced *Place Matters* - a statewide initiative to find permanent families for foster children, update social work practices and involve families in decisions affecting children in foster care.

In less than two years local departments have shown marked improvements in meeting their adoption goals, reducing the number of children placed in group homes, increasing reunifications, reducing the number of children coming into foster care and increasing the number of children placed in family settings.

"Two and a half years ago, we launched *Place Matters* to reform child welfare in Maryland" said Donald. "We take pride in the progress we've made to improve the lives of the vulnerable children and families we serve."

Directors and other staff from the Wicomico, Worcester and Queen Anne's counties local departments of social services will receive additional recognition from Governor Martin O'Malley during a reception to be held at the State House on September 17, 2009.